

BOROUGH OF LEOMINSTER  
HEREFORDSHIRE

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ANNUAL REPORT

on the

STATE of the PUBLIC HEALTH  
for the Year  
1948

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# Staff of the Public Health Department

Medical Officer of Health	...	...	H. F. GREEN, M.A., M.B., D.P.H. (Resigned on 31st May, 1948) M. J. PLEYDELL, M.C., M.D., D.P.H. (Appointed on 1st June, 1948)
Clerk	...	...	MISS S. DENSHAM
Sanitary Inspector	...	...	A. S. SMITH, M.S.I.A., C.R. San. I., Cert. Meat and other Foods, Cert. C.I.S. (Tel. : Leominster 257)

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*To the Mayor, Aldermen and Members of the Leominster Borough Council.*

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report for the Year 1948, which has been compiled in accordance with the Ministry of Health Circular 3/49.

During the course of the year, work on the housing programme has been continued; forty-four Council houses having been completed. Approximately one-third of the houses in the Borough, however, are classified as being in need of demolition and replacement, and, when viewed in this sombre perspective, the present needs of the community and the vast requirements of future construction are made very plain.

The water supply for the Borough has been satisfactory in quantity, and, with a few exceptions in the findings of the samples, in quality also. The system of sewage disposal remains the same as in previous years, and it is anticipated that this will become the subject of a public enquiry.

There have been outbreaks of measles and whooping cough during the year but fortunately both have had a favourable seasonal incidence and no fatalities have been recorded.

In conclusion I would like to express my appreciation of the assistance and co-operation shown to me by the Town Clerk and Borough Surveyor; while, in thanking the Sanitary Inspector for the help he has afforded me, I wish to acknowledge the thoroughness and conscientious attention to detail which invariably characterise his work.

M. J. PLEYDELL,  
*Medical Officer of Health.*

## SECTION A.—STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA

Area (in acres) ... ..	8,728
Population ... ..	6,170
Number of inhabited houses (end of 1948) according to the Rate Books	1,683
Rateable Value ... ..	£34,853
Sum represented by a Penny Rate ... ..	£139 7 6

### EXTRACT FROM THE VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR :

	Total	Male	Female
LIVE BIRTHS (Legitimate) ... ..	126	67	59
(Illegitimate) ... ..	6	3	3
Total ... ..	132	70	62
STILL BIRTHS ... ..	6	5	1
DEATHS ... ..	77	42	35
DEATHS FROM PUERPERAL CAUSES ... ..	1	—	1
DEATHS OF INFANTS UNDER ONE YEAR OF AGE (Legitimate) ... ..	6	2	4

### COMPARABLE DATA FOR ENGLAND AND WALES, 1948 :

Birth Rate (per 1,000 of the estimated resident population) ... ..	21.4
Birth Rate for England and Wales ... ..	17.9
Still Birth Rate (per 1,000 live and still births) ... ..	43.5
Still Birth Rate for England and Wales ... ..	23.0
Death Rate (per 1,000 of the estimated resident population) ... ..	12.5
Death Rate for England and Wales ... ..	10.8
Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000 live births) ... ..	45.5
Infant Mortality Rate for England and Wales ... ..	34.0

## SECTION B.—GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA

### LABORATORY FACILITIES

Laboratory facilities continue to be available at the County Public Health Laboratory, Hereford, which is under the administration of the Medical Research Council.

### CLINICS

There are no clinics provided by the Local Authority.

Under the County Council and Regional Hospital Board schemes the following Clinic facilities are available to residents in the district:—

Child Welfare Centre: In the annexe at the Leominster Cottage Hospital, every Friday, 2—4 p.m.

Venereal Diseases: At the County Council Hospital, Hereford, on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Orthopaedic After-Care Clinic: Organised on a voluntary basis and held at the Hospital annexe.

The schemes also provide for Maternity and Child Welfare Clinics, Paediatric, Ear, Nose and Throat, and Eye Clinics. During the year a Speech Therapist has been appointed to undertake treatment of those children suffering from speech defect. Children are referred to these Clinics as and when required, on the recommendation of the School Medical or Infant Welfare Authority, or at the request of the Medical Practitioner.

In addition a minor ailments clinic for school children is held twice a week, on Mondays and Fridays from 10—11 a.m., at the annexe at the Cottage Hospital. The object of this clinic is to give treatment for minor medical conditions before they develop into anything more serious and require the time and attention of the child's own doctor. It is thus preventive in nature. The clinic also serves a useful purpose in that regular supervision can be maintained over children with defects—such as visual and Orthopaedic defects—and is thus of assistance to the Education Authority.

## WATER SUPPLIES

The water supply to the Borough is obtained from deep sources at the main borehole at Worcester Road, and the well at Midsummer Meadow; and from a shallow source known as the Western Supply. From these sources the water is pumped up to the reservoir at Newlands, and has proved adequate, both in pressure and quantity, for the needs of the community throughout the year. The quality of the water before chlorination is good: three samples for bacteriological examination and three for chemical examination having been reported upon as satisfactory. Thirty-eight samples of the water after chlorination were taken during the year. Of these, four were not up to the bacteriological standard expected from a chlorinated water supply, but immediate repeat samples were reported upon as being sterile. Two samples of the water after chlorination proved to be satisfactory on chemical examination.

## DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE

Chemical examination of samples of sewage show that relatively little change in the character of the dilute sewage occurs during its passage down the Town Ditch, and that the sewage effluent at the point of entry into the River Arrow does not conform to the standards recommended by the Royal Commission on Sewage Disposal in its eighth report. Estimation of the Dry Weather Flows of the Town Ditch and Rivers Arrow, and conjoined Arrow and Lugg, indicate that the dilution factor is not sufficient to allow exemption from these standards, and that some form of treatment is required.

## HOUSING

An inspection of the figures of the housing survey shows that nearly one-third of the houses in the Borough require demolition and replacement. In addition many of the houses which are satisfactory from a structural standpoint, are badly overcrowded. With the population of the Borough increasing, it will probably be many years before housing conditions are satisfactorily improved, but during the course of the year, fifty-one houses were completed, forty-four of which were Council houses and seven privately built. Fortunately there was no serious flooding during the year to render the housing difficulties even more acute.

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I am indebted to Mr. A. S. Smith, Sanitary Inspector to the Council, for the following statement (Section C to E) furnished under the Sanitary Officers (outside London) Regulations.

## SECTION C.—SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES AND INSPECTION

### WATER

Chlorination of piped water supplies was continued throughout the year.

### PIPED SUPPLIES (Public Water Mains)

(1) The Piped water supply of the area and of its several parts has in general been satisfactory (a) in quality (b) in quantity.

## (2) BACTERIOLOGICAL EXAMINATIONS

Raw water before treatment — Three samples taken and all reported upon as satisfactory.

Water after Chlorination — Thirty-eight samples taken. Thirty-four samples reported upon as satisfactory, and four not up to standard expected of a chlorinated water supply.

## CHEMICAL EXAMINATIONS

Raw water before treatment — Three samples taken and reported upon as satisfactory.

Water after chlorination — Two samples taken and reported upon as satisfactory.

(3) No plumbo-solvent action — hard water.

(4) Action in respect of any form of contamination — Immediate re-sampling. All re-samples reported upon as satisfactory.

(5) Number of dwelling houses and population supplied from Public Water Mains:—

(a) Direct to houses — 1,430 houses. Approximate population 5,200.

(b) By means of stand pipes — 58 houses. Approximate population 200.

## SHALLOW WELL or SPRING WATER SUPPLIES

The approximate number of houses relying on spring or well water is as follows:—

Borough Proper	...	1	
Out-Parish	...	212	Approximate population 800.
Total	...	<u>213</u>	

## REMARKS

The following Out-Parish areas are not provided with piped supplies : Brierley, Elms Green, Stagbatch, Hyde Ash, Aulden and Wintercott, Ivington, Newtown, Stretford and Hennor, Wharton and Marlbrook. In general the water supplies for houses in out-parish areas are private shallow wells, usually unlined and of a type subject to contamination. Many houses are without sufficient water during dry summers. Of the twenty-six samples of well and spring water taken only four were reported upon as satisfactory. During the year 1949 piped water supply is expected to be provided for houses at Newtown and a part of Ivington. Piped supplies exist in the whole of the Borough Proper, and a portion of the Out-parish.

## SAMPLES TAKEN AND SUBMITTED FOR ANALYSIS

(a) Piped supplies (House taps, Waterworks well and Midsummer Meadow Well)	...	...	...	...	...	46
(b) Wells and Springs	...	...	...	...	...	26
(c) Swimming Bath (1 Bacteriological and 1 Chemical)	...	...	...	...	...	2

## DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE

### HOUSE DRAINS AND OTHER BUILDINGS

Smoke, colour and water tests	...	...	...	...	...	16
New drains laid (old premises)	...	...	...	...	...	12
Cleansed, trapped or ventilated	...	...	...	...	...	17
Inspection chambers built (old premises)	...	...	...	...	...	10
Septic Tanks built or cleansed	...	...	...	...	...	3

BOROUGH PROPER — Drainage of old premises is in the main poor, consisting usually of unjointed pipes, devoid of inspection chambers or ventilation shafts.

No Borough Sewage works exists and sewage disposal is to an open ditch.

OUT-PARISH — New houses drained to Septic Tanks. Old houses generally feed to ditches.

Number of Houses drained to sewer: Borough Proper	...	...	1,341
Out-Parish	...	...	38
Number of houses not drained to sewer: Borough Proper	...	...	30
Out-Parish	...	...	292

## CLOSETS

Additional provided (old houses and other buildings)	...	...	13
Conversions or renewals	...	...	3

BOROUGH PROPER — Common usage of closets, usually by the occupants of two houses, prevails in many cases. A type of closet existing on a large scale is the long hopper with a wooden surround. As new houses come into being, and areas are cleared, common usages will cease.

OUT-PARISH — Pails and privy closets predominate.

## RIVERS AND STREAMS

The extensive flooding of the previous year did not recur during 1948 and no working class houses were flooded or rendered uninhabitable.

## REFUSE DISPOSAL

Tipping was continued at the public tip with satisfactory results. Collections in the Borough Proper take place once or twice weekly according to locality. In the Out-parish there is no public collection, though certain houses in close proximity to the Borough Proper have refuse removed by the Council for a yearly charge.

## RODENT CONTROL

The sewers received treatment at certain manholes. Little evidence of rat infestation was found in the sewers. The Public Abattoir and refuse tip receive periodic treatment.

Premises rat proofed — 2.

COMMON LODGING HOUSES — None in the Borough or Out-Parish.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS — Number on register: 66.

Inspections: 45.

Defects found: 5.

Remedied: 4.

TENTS AND CARAVANS — Camping does not exist on a large scale. No sites registered.

Caravans removed: 4.

BEDBUGS — Although many old houses are infested no cases were reported during the year.

Houses disinfested: 1.

## DISINFECTION ON ACCOUNT OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Premises fumigated	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
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Mode of disinfection — Formalin lamps and liquid spraying.

Small portable sack disinfectant is available.

## SANITARY INSPECTION

TABLE SHOWING INSPECTIONS CARRIED OUT DURING THE YEAR  
TOGETHER WITH THE ACTION TAKEN AND THE RESULTS

INSPECTIONS UNDER	Number	Informal Notices served	Statutory Notices served	Notices Complied with
Housing (1936) Act ... ..	135	—	10	7
Housing (Public Health Acts) ... ..	213	123	8	105
Factories ... ..	45	5	—	4
Cowsheds and Dairies ... ..	116	4	—	4
Milk Samples ... ..	60	8	—	8
Food Premises and Kitchens ... ..	90	2	—	2
Abattoir ... ..	936	—	—	—
Drains (Smoke, Colour and Water Tests)	16	—	—	—
Water Samples ... ..	74	4	—	3
Infectious Diseases ... ..	6	—	—	—
Rodent Control ... ..	23	2	—	2
Ice Cream Premises ... ..	44	—	—	—
Ice Cream Samples ... ..	34	2	—	2
Miscellaneous Visits ... ..	52	—	—	—
Schools—School Camps ... ..	5	—	—	—
Tents and Caravans ... ..	4	1	—	1
Hopyards ... ..	7	4	—	4
	<b>1,860</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>142</b>
Defects Remedied ... ..	...	...	...	165
Dustbins Renewed ... ..	...	...	...	52

## SECTION D.—HOUSING

The List of Applicants for accommodation has now been revised in accordance with Ministry of Health Circular No. 171/48, and the following is a summary of live applications.

Classification of Applicants	Total No. of Separate families
Without separate homes ... ..	232
With separate homes ... ..	189
	<b>421</b>

Of the original list of housing applications 106 applicants failed to reply to the enquiry form issued, notwithstanding the fact that reminders had been forwarded. 106 application forms have therefore been cancelled.

The number of new houses completed and occupied during the year is as follows:—

COUNCIL HOUSES					
(a) Permanent	...	Brick	...	...	36
(b) Permanent	...	Prefabricated	...	...	8
		(Airey Type)	...	...	
PRIVATELY BUILT					
(c) Permanent	...	Brick	...	...	5
(d) Flats	...	Brick	...	...	2
					<b>51</b>

Working class houses in the lower regions of the Borough (an area which, apart from flooding, contains many houses unfit for human habitation) did not experience the dreadful flooding associated with previous years. It will be noted, however, from the statistics given below that the number of houses unfit for human habitation is bordering on 500—a depressing state of affairs covering a large proportion of the working class population.

A building programme of 40 houses per annum (if achieved) cannot possibly reduce for very many years the number of unfit houses existent, as 40 houses can comfortably be absorbed over a period of years by families living in lodgings or other adverse circumstances.

The present position is approximately as follows:—

	CATEGORIES					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Number of occupied privately owned premises (residential, working class, flats or rooms over shops) ...	655	228	45	9	475	1,412
Number of Council Houses occupied	286	—	—	—	3	289
Number of derelict void houses not demolished ...	—	—	—	—	22	22
Totals ...	941	228	45	9	500	1,723

Category 1: Satisfactory.

„ 2: Minor defects.

„ 3: Requiring repair, structural alteration or improvement.

„ 4: Appropriate for re-conditioning under Housing (Rural Workers) Acts.

„ 5: Requiring demolition and replacement.

#### STATISTICS RELATING TO COUNCIL HOUSES

	Built Pre 1939	Post War 1947-8	Old Houses Acquired	Total
Caswell Terrace ...	8	—	—	8
„ Crescent ...	28	—	—	28
„ Road ...	54	—	—	54
Worcester Road ...	6	—	—	6
Cranes Lane ...	6	—	—	6
Rainbow Street ...	6	—	—	6
Croft Street ...	43	4	—	47
Churchill Avenue ...	—	42	—	42
George Street ...	—	2	—	2
Holland Road ...	6	20*	—	26
Mortimer Street ...	39	—	—	39
Mortimer Place ...	2	—	—	2
Wigmore Street ...	10	8**	—	18
Waterworks Houses ...	2	—	—	2
Bargates ...	—	—	3	3
	210	76	3	289

\* Temporary prefabricated bungalows.

\*\* Permanent prefabricated houses (Airey type).

DEMOLITION ORDERS MADE ...	...	...	...	...	1
CLOSING ORDERS MADE (Part of Building) ...	...	...	...	...	3
VOID HOUSES DEMOLISHED DURING YEAR ...	...	...	...	...	19

## INSPECTION OF DWELLING HOUSES DURING THE YEAR:

(1) (a) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects under Public Health and Housing Acts ... ..	152
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ... ..	348
(2) Number of dwelling houses found not to be, in all respects, reasonably fit for human habitation ... ..	22

## ACTION UNDER STATUTORY NOTICES DURING THE YEAR:

### Proceedings under Public Health Act:

(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied ... ..	8
(2) Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices ... ..	7
(a) By owners ... ..	7
(b) By Local Authority in default of owners ... ..	Nil
Van Dwellings ... ..	Nil

## HOUSES BUILT AND OCCUPIED DURING THE YEAR:

(1) By Local Authority ... ..	44
(2) Privately ... ..	7

## SECTION E.

## INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

### 1. MILK SUPPLY.

Routine inspections of farms and dairies:

- (a) Examination for bacterial content — Samples sent to County Laboratory.
- (b) Examination for Tubercle Bacilli — None by Local Authority.

### 2. NUMBER OF SAMPLES TAKEN

Tuberculin Tested Milk ... ..	49
Pasteurised Milk ... ..	11
Old Cow houses brought up to modern standards ... ..	2
Electric Pasteurization Plant installed ... ..	1

### 3. FOOD PREMISES

Routine inspections from time to time. General standard of cleanliness is good.

## ICE CREAM

The following tables show the number of samples of Ice Cream taken, analyses and grades.

Methylene Blue Test	Number of Samples	Provisional Grades	Number of Samples
Not decolourised in $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours ... ..	12	1	14
Decolourised immediately ... ..	1		
„ in $\frac{1}{2}$ hour ... ..	5	2	8
„ „ 1 hour ... ..	2		
„ „ 2 hours ... ..	4	3	10
„ „ $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours ... ..	1		
„ „ 3 hours ... ..	2	4	2
„ „ $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours ... ..	2		
„ „ 4 hours ... ..	3		
„ „ $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours ... ..	2		
Total samples taken	34	Total samples taken	34

NOTE.—In cases where samples fell within Grades 3 and 4, the vendors were communicated with. Improved plant and equipment has been installed in two premises.

## MEAT

Meat Inspection (Public Abattoir).—Centralised slaughtering under the Ministry of Food scheme of control is in operation. Areas served are Leominster Borough, Leominster and Wigmore Rural District, Kington Urban and Rural Districts, and Weobley Rural District. Inspection is carried out by your Sanitary Inspector, who is a qualified Meat Inspector. This responsibility entails for him additional evening and week-end work.

The undernoted were slaughtered and inspected during the year:—

Beasts	Pigs	Sheep	Calves	Total
1,100	106	5,100	514	6,820

Diseased Meat discovered and dealt with:—

### ALL DISEASES EXCEPT TUBERCULOSIS

	Beasts	Pigs	Sheep	Calves
Whole carcasses condemned ... ..	32	6	51	10
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ... ..	657	25	730	16
Percentage of number affected with diseases other than Tuberculosis ...	62.6%	29.2%	15.3%	5.1%

### TUBERCULOSIS ONLY

	Beasts	Pigs	Sheep	Calves
Whose carcasses condemned ... ..	26	4	—	1
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ... ..	33	2	—	—
Percentage of number affected with Tuberculosis ... ..	5.4%	5.6%	—	.2%
Weight of diseased meat discovered and dealt with ... ..	37,852 lbs.	1,572 lbs.	4,568 lbs.	881 lbs.
Total ...	44,873 lbs.			

The percentage figures show the proportion of food animals found diseased.

METHOD OF INSPECTION.—In accordance with Ministry of Health Memorandum 62 (Foods), with certain relaxations.

The Public Health (Meat) Regulations, 1924, are well observed by all meat traders. No Meat Marketing Scheme under Part III of the Regulations is in operation. Byelaws are in force respecting slaughter-houses.

## OTHER FOODS

The undernoted foods were surrendered during the year:—

49 tins Fruit; 127 tins Vegetables; 49 tins Fish; 10 stone Fish; 50 packets Cheese; 6 tins Soup; 1 tin Sausages; 44lbs. Sausages; 101 tins Milk; 72 Fish Cakes; 23 tins Jam/Syrup; 2 tins Fruit Salad; 10 tins Fruit Juice; 4 packets Biscuits; 93 tins Corned Beef; 84 jars Pickles; 576 Pies; 12½lbs. Dried Fruit; 60lbs. Spaghetti Pearls; 1 tin Spaghetti; 28lbs. Sausage Meat; 140 Fish Cakes; 119 packets Wheat and Corn Flakes (returned for re-packing); 3 tins Meat Extract; 4lbs. Brawn; 240lbs. Bacon (salvaged); 138lbs. Imported Beef; 565lbs. English Beef (Salvaged); 2 casks Pigs' Feet (204lbs.); 6lbs. Flour; 1 tin Pudding.

## SECTION F.—PREVALENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE

**MEASLES.** During the year there was an epidemic of measles. One hundred and forty-two cases were notified, this figure being more than double the highest figure previously recorded in 1944. The outbreak was relatively late in its incidence, 126 cases being notified in the second quarter of the year, of which 61 cases were males, and 65 females. The majority of these cases occurred in the 4—7 years age group, an important factor since complications and fatalities from this disease occur chiefly in toddlers under the age of three years.

**WHOOPING COUGH.** As sometimes occurs, the epidemic of measles was followed by an outbreak of whooping cough, a total of 88 cases being notified during the year. The bulk of these cases occurred in the third quarter of the year, when 33 males and 40 females were affected. This is relatively late in the year for an epidemic, the infection normally showing a marked seasonal prevalence during the winter and spring months. This outbreak, also, is the highest yet recorded, the previous maximum having occurred—as with measles—in 1944, when 56 cases were notified.

No deaths were reported from either of these infections.

**SCARLET FEVER.** Four cases of scarlet fever were notified during the year, of which three were removed to the Isolation Hospital at Credenhill. One of these was a child awaiting operation in the Leominster Cottage Hospital. Routine precautionary measures included the postponement of non-urgent admissions and operations, and prophylactic sulphonamide therapy for patient contacts, and it is satisfactory to note that no secondary cases occurred.

### DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION

Health Education measures taken during the year to increase the percentage of immunised children included the exhibition of slides at the Clifton Cinema and the display of posters. As from July 5th the duties relating to immunisation were transferred to the Herefordshire County Council and the following figures are presented with the permission of the County Medical Officer.

Number of children at 31st December, 1948 who had completed a course of immunisation at any time before that date (i.e. at any time since 1st January, 1934).

Age at 31. 12. 48	Under 1	1	2	3	4	5-9	10-14	Total under 15	Estimated mid-year child population 1948		
									Under 5	5-14	Total
i.e. Born in year	1948	47	46	45	44	39- 43	34- 38				
	2	45	51	55	59	204	238	654	558	900	1458

These figures indicate that 37.9% of the child population under 5 years of age has been immunised against diphtheria as compared with 33.8% at the end of 1947. 49.1% of the child population of 5-14 years has been immunised against diphtheria as compared with 52% at the end of the previous year; while 44.9% of the children under 15 years of age has been protected against diphtheria by immunisation.

### TUBERCULOSIS

At the end of 1948, the Tuberculosis Register contained the names of twenty-nine males and thirteen females, who normally reside within the Borough.

During the year, eighteen new cases were notified, sixteen on account of Pulmonary Tuberculosis, and two because of the presence of the disease in parts of the body other than the lungs.

During the same period, five deaths of persons suffering from Tuberculosis occurred; two persons recovered from the disease, and four left the district.

# CAUSES OF DEATH (all ages)

<i>Disease</i>				Males	Females	Total
Tuberculosis	...	...	...	5	0	5
Cancer (all forms)	...	...	...	6	3	9
Intra-cranial vascular lesions	...	...	...	4	5	9
Diseases of the Heart and Arteries	...	...	...	12	15	27
Bronchitis, Pneumonia and other respiratory diseases	...	...	...	0	2	2
Diseases of the Digestive system	...	...	...	1	1	2
Nephritis	...	...	...	2	0	2
Puerperal sepsis	...	...	...	0	1	1
Prematurity and congenital conditions at birth	...	...	...	2	3	5
Violence	...	...	...	3	0	3
All other causes	...	...	...	8	5	13